

## النصوص المالكية في الأمريكيتين إبان القرن التاسع عشر

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### ملخص المداخلة بالعربية

خلال القرنين الثامن عشر والتاسع عشر، تواجد ما يزيد عن 40 ألف مسلم في أمريكا الشمالية والكاربي حسب أغلب التقديرات. وكان أغلبهم يعيش في ظل نظام العبودية السائد آنذاك، والقليل منهم تمكن من نقل الإسلام إلى الأجيال اللاحقة. وباعتبار هؤلاء المسلمين أتوا من غرب إفريقيا، فقد كانوا متشبعين بالفكر الصوفي والمذهب المالكي. أما المسلمون المهاجرون في أواخر القرن التاسع عشر، فقد جاءوا من شبه القارة الهندية، ومن «الإمبراطورية العثمانية» كما كانت تسمى سابقا، وكان أغلبهم يعتنق فكرا سلفيا أو حنفيا وبالتالي كان ارتباطهم المعرفي أو العرقي أو الديني بالمسلمين الأوائل محدودا.

لكن عندما نطلع على تاريخ الإسلام في أمريكا، والأدب الذي أنتجه هؤلاء المسلمون المالكيون، فإننا نعثر على ميلاد الأدب الإفريقي-الأمريكي والأدب الأمريكي المسلم. عندئذ تبرز ثلاث شخصيات: بلالي محمد، الذي ألف كتيبا من ثلاث عشرة صفحة حول كيفية الصلاة في الإسلام، ومبادئ العقيدة الإسلامية. ثم هناك الشيخ سانا سي من باناما الذي كتب الورد اليومي على الطريقة القادرية. وأخيرا أبو بكر من جمايكا، الذي كتب ما يزيد عن

الخمسين صفحة حول العقيدة الإسلامية والصلاة، والأسرة المسلمة، وقانون المجتمع المسلم. هذه النصوص المالكية الأولى ستكون محور مداخلتي.

### ملخص المداخلة بالفرنسية

#### **Les textes malékites élaborés au continent américain au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle.**

Inspirés de la pensée soufie et de la doctrine malékite, plusieurs musulmans venant de l'Afrique de l'est, qui ont émigré en Afrique comme esclaves, ont donné naissance à la littérature afro-américaine et à la littérature américaine musulmane. Parmi les renommés de cette littérature, on peut citer :

- Bilali Mohamed qui a écrit un livret de 13 pages sur la prière en Islam.
- Cheikh Sanassi de Panama qui a écrit « Al-wird al-yawmi » l'invocation quotidienne selon la conduite Kadirite.
- Abu Bakr de Jamaïque qui a écrit plus de 50 pages portant sur la foi islamique, la prière, la famille musulmane et loi musulmane.

Notre intervention jettera la lumière sur ces premiers écrits malékites des musulmans de l'Amérique.

### ملخص المداخلة بالانجليزية

#### **Maliki texts in the Americas in the 19th century**

During the 18th and 19th centuries in North America and the Carribean there were by most estimates over 40,000 Muslims. Almost all were here in chattel slavery and few were able to pass Islam on to the next generations. They were West African Muslims of Sufi and Maliki religious traditions. The Muslims of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent and the former Ottoman Empire. They were predominately Salafi or Hanafi and thus had little scholastic, ethnic or religious connections to the earlier Muslims. However, when writing the history of Islam in American and

about the literature produced by these early Maliki Muslims we find the birth of African-American and American Muslim literature. Three individuals stand out: Bilali Muhammad who wrote a 13 page pamphlet on the Islamic prayer ritual and the essentials of Islamic belief, Shaykh Sana See of Panama who wrote the daily Wird of the Qadariyyah Tariqat, and Abu Bakr of Jamiaca who wrote a fifty plus page work on Islamic belief, prayer, and Islamic family and community law. These early Maliki texts are the focus of my presentation.



## **Maliki texts in the Americas in the 19th century**

### **Introduction**

From during the era of slavery some three hundred pages of Arabic texts remain extant. A close study reveals that all but three manuscripts were autobiographic or excerpts from the Qur'an. These were the writings of Bilali Muhammad of Sapelo Island, Georgia, the Qadriyya daily award as penned by Shaykh Sanaa See in Panama, and the work *Kitab al-Ṣalāt* by Muhammad Kaba of Jamaica.

### **Meditations from Bilali Muhammad**

Bilali was originally from Timbo, Guinea where he studied in a traditional Jahanke Mektap. The Jahanke were a travelling clerical family that brought the *Kitab al-Shifa* (Qadi Ayyad's biography of the prophet Muhammad), the *Muwatta* (the Hadith collection of Imam Malik), and the *Jalalayn* (the Qur'an commentary co-authored by Imam Suyuti) to West Africa. Other texts that would have been studied would include the basic fiqh text called the *Risalah* of Abi Zayd and the *Mukhtasr al-Akdari* on the basics of prayer.

Bilali was captured and sold into slavery as a teen in the 1780s and after more than a decade of slavery in the British colony of the Middle Caicos was sold to Thomas Spaulding of Sapelo Island, Georgia. From the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until his death in 1857, he served as the head slave driver and raised a large family that included seven daughters and twelve sons. Most of the current residents of Sapelo Island can be traced to Bilali through one of his daughters.

Over time most of his children became Christians, but traces of the Islamic faith continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these included feast days, several African or Muslim first names, and remembrance of some portions of Islamic ritual of prayer such as the *awrad* (litany) and *dhikr* (repeating of various prayers and attributes of Allah) after *Ṣalāt*.

In the 1830s Bilali wrote a 15 page text of around 750 words that covered the basic concepts of wudu (ablution), aqidah (Islamic beliefs), the adhan and iqamah (calls to prayer), and how to perform Ṣalāt al-Fajr and Ṣalāt al-Subh (morning obligatory and supplementary prayers). The majority of the text can be traced to excerpts from the introduction and the chapters of the Risalah of Abi Zayd dealing with Aqidah, Wudu, Adhan, Iqamah, and the morning prayers.

The text is written in Arabic, but the script is in a West African style and is written as a spoken text rather than a literary text so letters of related sounds are conflated. This makes the text difficult to decipher, but not impossible once spelling patterns and the organization of the text are determined.

Bilali starts with explaining why he wrote the text. This introduction is similar to that of Abi Zayd except that Bilali does not mention that the text follows the Maliki Madhhab.

“This is a very concise summary of the obligatory (wajib) actions of the religion (dinn). These actions are from the Sunnah or example of the Prophet Muhammad. One of these is the example (Sunnah) and the obligatory (Sunnah muaqadah) and the optional (nafl) and desirable (raghība) and pertaining to good manners (adab) and how to pray from the rules (Usul al-Fiqh).”

After this, Bilali lists several of the beliefs of Islam according to the Ashari school of thought. These include belief in Allah, His angels, Heaven and Hell, the Day of Judgment, Prophets, Books, and Predestination. Bilali also includes the names of the Khulafah Rashidah, benedictions upon the Prophet Muhammad and his family, and the need for following the religious leadership within the larger Muslim community.

### **Islamic Concepts in Bilali's Meditations**

The lists of the types of Islamic rulings begin the text after a benediction to the Prophet Muhammad and his family. The first concepts in the text are Islamic beliefs and begins with the first pillar of Islam is belief in Allah. This includes belief in His nature, prophets, and revelations. Bilali would have accepted Jesus (Isa) as a Prophet and

the Messiah because he was a Muslim. The nature of God, revelation, and eschatology are often the first topics covered in Islamic catechisms.

### **Belief in Allah**

This concept of belief in Allah and His ability to give guidance and succor in times of needs and in times of success is perhaps the most prevalent in the manuscript of Bilali. He frequently uses the phrases: “In the name of Allah,” “I ask mercy from Allah,” and “Allah can forgive.” In addition to this he uses the names or attributes of Allah (the Asma ul-Husna) and writes several formulas for remembrance (dhikr and tasbih) of Allah. The idea of the unique nature of Allah that has become a part of the formula for dhikr, the adhan, and the iqama are found in Ayatul Kursi where we read “Allahu La Illaha Ilah Hu” and in Surah Al-Hashr Ayat 22 “Hu Allah aladdhi la Illaha illah Hu.”

With the concept of belief in Allah comes acceptance of guidance from Him. This guidance can occur to individuals only or to a group, and has taken the forms of books in the past. Muslims hold the Qur’ān to be the final message from Allah, while the Prophet Muhammad is viewed as the last of a long series of Prophets and Messengers.

This guidance was sent down through Prophets and Messengers. This guidance can be found in a Scripture, like the Bible or the Qur’ān, and through individual inspiration that was not sent in written form. Among the written revelation Muslims accept are the Taurat (Torah) of Musa (Moses), the Zabur (Psalms) of Dawud (David), and the Injil (Gospels) of Isa (Jesus).

This belief in guidance means not only to accept the existence of guidance but to follow its precepts. We must be prepared to meet the Creator on the Day of Judgment. One method Allah gave us to be ready for the Day of Judgment is worship (Ibadat). A Muslim also believes in Heaven, Hell, the Day of Judgment, the Unseen, Allah’s Books, and His Messengers. Interpretations of each of these may differ, but not believing in them means that the doubter is automatically outside of the fold of Islam.

## **Belief in the Prophets**

This belief in Prophets includes: Old Testament Prophets, Prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān, Jesus, Prophets not mentioned in the Qur'ān but who taught Tawhid (Unicity of Allah), and belief in the Seal of Prophethood in the person of Prophet Muhammad. This belief also includes belief in the Books of the prior Prophets.

This is shown from Bilali's repeating the witnessing of faith (shahadah) several times in the manuscript (especially when giving the formula for the adhan and iqamah). Along with this is given the concepts of Khulafah Rashidun (the first four Khalifahs) and that the sayings and actions (Sunnah and Hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad were related accurately. On page two we find the statements, "Peace be upon our Master Muhammad, he is the witness that witnesses, then Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman, then 'Ali. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all." and "There are none from the companions of [the Prophet] that related except what they were told by the Prophet." In the previous statement following the Sunnah (the example of the Prophet Muhammad) was mentioned.

In accepting the Prophet we accept his office of Prophethood and its powers (guidance, example, and temporal rule). This mean the Prophet has guidance from Allah, was a ruler, and was the best from among Mankind. He was the "caller to Allah." We are responsible for our own actions and cannot confess or ask forgiveness from any man for them but must ask Allah to forgive us. Finally, Muslims should stay united and avoid anything that divides them.

The last half of Bilali text covers the rules for wudu, adhan, iqamah, and for Ṣalāt behind an Imam at morning prayers. The rules and descriptions follow Abi Zayd's text more closely than the first six pages of Bilali's text but is original in its order and what is not covered therein. An interesting feature of his text is his presentation of supplications said in prayer.

I seek your protection from the trials of life and death, from the trials of the grave, from the trials of the anti-Christ (Massiah al-Dajjal), from the torments of the Fire and an evil end. Peace and kindness of



God be upon you, O' Prophet, peace be upon us, and the righteous servants of God.

This prayer and the one of dhikr after Morning Prayer are similar but not identical to those found in the Risalah. This and other features of the text shows the unique nature of this piece of American Maliki Literature.

### **The Kitab al-Ṣalāt**

Muhammad Kaba Saghanughu (c. 1757-1845) wrote several letters in Arabic and a fifty plus page text on prayer that covered many areas that Bilali's Meditations did, but quoted many Sufi texts and traditional Fiqh texts which gave it a stronger scholarly base. His Kitab al-Ṣalāt shows evidence of training in the Qadariyyah Tariqat and in the Jahanke or Serrechule schools of traveling clerics. As a student he would have studied the Qur'ān, the Tafsir Jalalilyn, the Shifa of Qadi Ayad, and the Muwatta of Imam Malik at a minimum. His texts show familiarity with more advanced Sufi texts and with the Hadith collection of Bukhari and Muslim.

The Kitab al-Ṣalāt is much easier to read than Bilali's text and quotes extensively from Hadith, Qur'an, Sufi text, and other Maliki texts. Previous studies have suggested that it was prepared as a textbook for secluded Mektabs in Jamaica (see Lovejoy for more details). While Bilali only tells how to perform the Morning Prayer, Muhammad Kaba tells the virtues of Friday and each prayer of that day starting with the Morning Prayer.

About the Day of Judgment, Bilali says the following, "The scales will be set up to weigh the works of men; whoever's balance is heavy has done well. ... The path (sirāt) is real. Men will pass over it at different speeds, according to the measure of their works, being saved from the fire of Hell. But some will fall into the fire because of their works. ... [God will come] on the day of resurrection with His angels in array to put peoples on display, together with their accounts, their punishments and their rewards."

Muhammad Kaba gives specific details about the trails of sinners in the graves and on the Day of Judgment that Bilali does not even

discuss. He also goes into detail about the Prophet Muhammad being the intercessor for Muslims on that day. Likewise, Muhammad Kaba describes in details the Sirat (bridge) that everyone transverses and the success or failure of the journey determining where their abode will be for eternity.

The second half of Muhammad Kaba's text covers the rules for wudu and for the performance of prayer. He also gives further details than Bilali on those topics and adds a colophon to his manuscript. Like Bilali's and the Awrad of Shaykh Sana See discussed below, Muhammad Kaba's texts have only recently begun to be studied and have not be completely translated.

### **The Awrad of Shaykh Sana See**

Shaykh Sana See was a Sufi Shaykh that worked on the railroad in Panama in the 1850s. Six pages of his writings have been discovered and two of them are selections from the daily litany for the Qadriyyah Tariqat.

Moustafa Bayoumi translate a portion of one of the six pages where Sana See describes the founder of the Qadriyyah Sufi Order as, "The wave of generosity and piety. The saving spirit in heaven and earth. My master and teacher Abd-el Kader al-Jilani, may Allah be please with him, Amen." He prays that, "Allah profit us by the blessings of his knowledge." The Shaykh also showers praises upon the prophet Muhammad, "O Allah, please bless our master, protector, and prophet. Our beloved, who will intercede for us on the Day of Judgment, is the bearer of the glad tidings of enlightenment, and the apple of our eyes."

Bayoumi does not translate the awrad other than to say the one for Friday contains the phrase "praise be to God." According to Bayoumi's reading, Shaykh Sana See tells us the value of the awrad when he says,

"If any one of the believers applies these awrad and pronounces them in a proper and acceptable way, then if he is indebted, Allah will cover the debt. If he was imprisoned Allah will hasten his release from jail. ... Whomever persists in doing that will be safe from calamity and anything that would frighten him in this world. He would attain the same level as Awliya, the martyrs, and those who do good."

## **Conclusion**

The three texts briefly covered in this paper represent the known Maliki texts in the Americas during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are unique and even after a growth of Islam in America represent a major part of the Western Maliki canon even today. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century major Maliki texts have been translated into English, Spanish, Italian and French, but few original texts have been written outside the African continent. This will likely change in the future as converts to Islam and children of immigrants begin to study in traditional Maliki schools.

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